

# PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN ENSURING PEACE IN GHANA'S BODY POLITY: A CASE STUDY OF GHANA'S POLITICAL PARTY FUNCTIONARIES

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## Abstract:

After experiencing massive social, political and economic upheavals in Ghana between 1966 and 1992, Ghana ushered in constitutional democracy in 1992. Since that period, the country, compared with her neighbours, has been enjoying relative political stability. Prior to adopting the Western type of democracy, after gaining independence in 1957, religion played a significant role in ensuring peace and stability of the body polity. The question that this paper sought to find an answer to is: Do modern-day Ghanaian politicians exercise their political authority based on their religious beliefs and practices like in the past, thereby ensuring peace? Using the country's functionaries of political parties as a case study, the paper sought to answer the question above. Data for the study were collected using both survey questionnaire and in-depth interview from 44 functionaries of political parties through purposive sampling. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Findings from the study were analysed using the Statistical Product for Social Services (SPSS). The positions of Habermas, Rawls and their critics regarding the role of religion in the public sphere formed the theoretical framework for the study. It is the thinking of this paper that, like in the past, opinion leaders, including politicians, should exercise their authority based on their religious convictions, since this would contribute to peace and development.

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**Key Words:** Religion, Politics, Peace, functionaries, political parties

## Introduction

Religion is arguably one of the single most significant causes of warfare and turmoil in human history (Abu-Nimer 2001, p. 685; Gopin 1997, p. 1; Diez de Velasco 2007). So much malevolence has been done in the name of religion (Ayer 1976, p. 225 cited in Collins et al. 2006). Religious hierarchies have sided on occasions with the oppressors rather than the oppressed. Alongside the advent of new threats, such as ecological and nuclear disaster, people around the world violate the most basic tenets of their own creeds in promoting state and group terror. Sadly, this impacts mostly on the helpless (Alibhai-Brown 2004, p. 34 cited in Collins et al.). However, so much good has also been done in the name of religion (Ayer 1976 cited in Collins et al. 2006). Examples include the work of the church-sponsored 'Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory' in Guatemala; the mediation efforts by the Catholic Church in Chile; the organisation of reconciliation projects by the churches in Burundi and Rwanda; the activities of the *Comunita di Sant'Egidio* in countries such as Algeria, Guatemala, Kosovo and Uganda; the mediation work of religious communities in Mozambique; church support for and cooperation with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa; and the efforts of the Catholic and Protestant churches to promote healing in Northern Ireland (Clark 2010). Religion can, therefore, be described as a force for peace, too. It offers a deep source of understanding, reconciliation, human fellowship and peace that

transcends secular divisions (Abu-Nimer 2001, p. 685; Gopin 1997, p. 1; Rouner 2012; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2005 p.311).

### **Contextual Issues**

A single and universally accepted definition of peace has eluded humanity, just as the quest for peace has been one of the preoccupations of humans since the dawn of history. There have been several definitions of peace ranging from the erroneous definition of peace as the mere absence of war to political definitions of peace. The African conception of peace-Ubuntu, will form the basis of our understanding of peace in this context. Ubuntu is an all-embracing African interpretation of peace, which recognises both positive and negative peace. Ubuntu as a concept is widely used in East, Central and Southern Africa, and it offers a more holistic and humanistic conception of peace as it embraces all the dimensions of peace. This African conception of peace recognises the fact that in order to ensure lasting peace some elements should be present. These include “acknowledgement of guilt, showing of remorse and repentance by a perpetrator of injustice, asking for and receiving of forgiveness, and paying compensation or reparation as a prelude for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence” (Francis 2006 p.26). Ubuntu also explains our common humanity as a strong basis for peaceful coexistence: “...I am human because I belong, I participate, I share” (Desmond Tutu, cited in Francis 2006 p.26). This African conceptualisation of peace does not see peace as “only the absence of war, conflict, violence, fear, destruction and human suffering, but also the absence of unequal and unjust structures and cultural practices, about security, democratic participation, respect for human rights, development, social progress and justice” (Francis 2006 p. 27).

Religion, a multi-faceted phenomenon (Bellin 2008), has defied a universally accepted definition, but some scholars have come out with some definitions, some of which will serve as working definitions for this paper. Tunde Famoriti (2007) defines religion as “a systematic indoctrination of people aimed at moderating their mode of behaviour towards responsible interaction and societal growth.” Ugwu (2002) states that it deals with “faith and practices involving the relationship between mankind and what is regarded as sacred”. Pali and Wadak (2001) assert that “religion regulates the life of the individual in the society, thereby making the society good for harmonious living”. According to Roberts (1984, quoted in Assimeng 1989) religion “may be regarded as including those emotionalised beliefs prevalent in a social group concerning the supernatural, plus the overt behaviour, material objects, and symbols associated with such beliefs”. According to Geertz (1972), religion provides their members with both a model for and model of reality; it plays various roles in peoples’ lives. What this means is that religion provides its members with an ethos, a worldview and values as well as a source of identity and legitimacy, and is also “associated with formal institution” (Fox and Sandler 2004, p.176-7). This conceptualisation complements Bruce Lincoln’s definition of religion, which recognises that religion is a set of collectively held spiritual beliefs articulated in a discourse, perpetuated and interpreted by institutions, communities, and associated practices (Lincoln 2003). Following from this explanation, it can be concluded that since religion to a large extent determines the worldview of its members, it can be argued that adherents of religion may practice politics based on the religious doctrines which they have internalised. A variety of theories of religion and politics also tell us we cannot ignore the role of religion as an attribute of individuals and communities, as an organised interest, and in its institutional connections with the state (Gill 1998; Gill and Keshavarzian 1999; Warner 2000; Ammerman 2003; Manza and Wright 2003; Kniss and Numrich 2007; Philpott 2007).

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinning**

In this section we will discuss the works of Nicholas Wolterstorff, Juergen Habermas and John Rawls, who have been involved in discussions on the interconnection between religion and politics.

Wolterstorff, in his oft-quoted passage, states that ‘it belongs to the religious convictions of a good many religious people in our society that they ought to base their decisions concerning fundamental issues of justice on their religious convictions. They do not view it as an option whether or not to do it... Their religion is not, for them, about something other than their social and political existence.’ (Wolterstorff 1997: 105) This is, however, related to the second, more provocative statement that because of the unbearable burden on religious citizens, we cannot ask them to translate their arguments in the informal public sphere and that the same applies to the public sphere in general, i.e. including formal reasoning in the legislature as well as the judiciary. In other words, religious citizens cannot artificially divide their identity into the private, religiously motivated self and the public self whose acts are based primarily on public reasoning, whereby a person’s public reasoning can even run counter to the same person’s privately held beliefs about proper actions (cf. Yates 2007; Wolterstorff 1997; Weithman 2002 cited in Kratochvíl 2009).

Wolterstorff’s statements indicate that he hotly contests Rawls and Habermas’s positions regarding the role of religion in the public sphere. For Rawls the condition *sine qua non* for a functioning liberal democratic public deliberation is the practical application of publicly accessible and understandable justification: If the state acquiesced to one particular moral doctrine and gave it precedence over another, for instance by granting the arguments derived from this doctrine public validity without recourse to ‘public reason’ (for the definition of this term, see Rawls 1997a and 1997b cited in Kratochvíl 2009), the resulting situation would be either that of a hegemonic position of one particular religious group over the society or the breakdown of public order and an explosion of religious struggle. This obviously does not mean that a stance defended by a religious citizen that is in accordance with his or her religious belief is not permissible at all, but rather that ‘a responsible citizen in a liberal democracy ought not to support (or reject) a coercive law on the basis of religious convictions alone’ (Eberle 2002: 12 cited in Kratochvíl 2009)

In his latest texts on public reason (*The idea of public reason revisited*, and *Introduction to the paperback edition of Political Liberalism*) Rawls developed what he called a ‘wide view of public political culture’ and explained more explicitly to what extent religious arguments are allowed to enter public debate. He thereby introduced his famous proviso which states that reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious and nonreligious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, provided that in due course, proper political reasons – and not reasons given solely by comprehensive doctrines – are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are said to support. So, religious reasons are not excluded from public debate but they can only be introduced on the condition that in the course of the debate adequate reasons acceptable to all reasonable citizens are also provided. However, in applying this proviso, two further qualifications should be noted. First, Rawls indicates that the proviso does not hold for the background culture. In civil society religious and other comprehensive doctrines may properly play a role, without any restrictions. Secondly, the limits imposed by public reason and the proviso do not apply to all political questions indiscriminately, but only to those ‘involving what we may call “constitutional essentials” and questions of basic justice’. As a result, the proviso is in the first place relevant in the official discourse of judges, legislators, chief executives, and other government officials (Loobuyck et al. Accessed online on September 8, 2012 <http://adss.library.uu.nl/publish/articles/000090/bookpart.pdf>)

Let us turn to the second influential view of religion in the public – that of Habermas. Even though comparative studies of Rawls and Habermas often exaggerate the different stances they take vis-à-vis the role of religion in the public sphere (Yates 2007 cited in Kratochvíl 2009), once we take into account the intellectual exchange between the two (starting from the exchange in 1995: Habermas 1995; Rawls 1995 cited in Kratochvíl 2009), it is clear that their positions demonstrate a great – and growing – similarity. Habermas also draws a clear line beyond which religious arguments are not permissible. In a manner strikingly similar to Rawls, Habermas claims that ‘the institutional

thresholds between the “wild life” of the political public sphere and the formal proceedings within political bodies are also a filter that from the Babel of voices in the informal flows of public communication allows only secular contributions to pass through.’ (Habermas 2006: 10 cited in Kratochvíl 2009) Unlike Rawls, however, Habermas identifies the informal public sphere (nigh synonymous to the Rawlsian background culture) as the appropriate locus of translation of particular reasons specific to individual (not only) religious groups into the publicly accessible language of the formal public sphere: ‘The truth content of religious contributions can only enter into the institutionalized practice of deliberation and decision-making if the necessary translation already occurs in the pre-parliamentarian domain, i.e., in the political public sphere itself.’ (ibid.) In addition, for Habermas, it is not so much the content of the deliberations in the public sphere that is most relevant, but rather their procedural aspects (Habermas 1999 cited in Kratochvíl 2009). Theoretically, this opens up more space for those who want to defend a political stance grounded in a religious belief. Habermas himself, in his defence of the ‘post-secular society’, cites at least two reasons for which this greater openness towards religious reasons should be supported even by the secular state. The first is a direct response to the split identity objection. Habermas insists that we should not ask religious citizens to give up their private reasoning in the political public sphere if this should ‘endanger their religious mode of life’ (Habermas 2006: 10 cited in Kratochvíl 2009). The second reason points to the (so far) irreplaceable role of religion in the public sphere, where religious actors are often capable of discovering hidden intuitions or of recreating lost elements of meaning and identity (ibid.). Habermas believes that the informal public sphere should be the site of mutual dialogue among different groups with different sets of beliefs where all of them engage in self-reflexive exposure of their values and aim at the translation of their specific principles into a language that would be understandable to outsiders as well. Importantly, this task does not pertain only to religious citizens since it requires that secular citizens also remain ‘sensitive to the articulation power of religious languages’ (Habermas 2002: 71 cited in Kratochvíl 2009). It is exactly the obligation to translate religious reasons into secular terms that is seen as the critical juncture by the opponents of the liberal view of religion in the public sphere. For instance, Paul Weithman (2002 cited in Kratochvíl 2009), among others, criticises Rawls’ requirement of translation as unnecessary and discriminatory. According to Weithman, basing one’s own arguments on his or her moral or philosophical doctrine and being able to give reasons for which the measure advocated is equally good for everyone from the point of that particular doctrine is a sufficient condition for participation in public deliberation. In other words, it is again, as with Wolterstorff, the need for translation into the secular language that is challenged as inappropriate. The three positions towards the role of religion in the public sphere sketched above are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Role of Religion in the Public Sphere**

	<b>Position I ( Rawls)</b>	<b>Position II (Habermas)</b>	<b>Position III (Wolterstorff Weithman)</b>
Distinction between formal and informal public spheres	Yes	Yes	No
Formal public sphere/public	Secular reasons	Secular reasons	Non-secular reasons
Informal public sphere/background	Non-secular reasons dominant	Secular and non-secular reasons	Non-secular reasons

culture			
Locus of translation	Unspecified	Informal public sphere	None

**Source:** Kratochvíl, P. The Religion-Politics Nexus in East-Central Europe: Church in the Public Sphere of Post-Secular Societies. Perspectives 2009 Vol. 17, No. 2

It is clear that there is a broad overlap between Rawls and Habermas in terms of justificatory liberalism (the grey fields in the table) – for both of them, (1) advocacy of a measure is justified in the formal public sphere as long as it is supported by secular reasons; (2) in the informal public sphere, the plurality of voices can include non-secular reasons as well; and, as a consequence, for both, (3) the distinction between these two types of public reasoning is vital. The most important difference between them, on the other hand, lies in Habermas’ assertion that the informal public sphere is the place where translations from one language into the other must take place. In this sense, the Rawlsian background culture is more restrictive than the Habermasian informal public sphere. While background culture is primarily concerned with discussions within particular associations (e.g. churches) (Rawls, 1997: 99 cited in ), Habermas sees the informal public sphere as including both deliberations within these bodies and deliberations between them. Hence, a mixture of secular and non-secular reasons is present in the informal public sphere as the particular associations try to enter into dialogue with other associations and hence feel the need to translate their reasons into terms that are intelligible for citizens with other comprehensive doctrines. Position III in the table 1 above starts from the premise that there is no need for that kind of translation. As a result, the distinction between the two kinds of public spheres is not necessary, and reasons based on comprehensive doctrines can be present in public deliberations of any kind, including those of legislators and the justice.

#### **Data and Methods**

Data for the study were collected through survey questionnaire and in-depth interview from functionaries of political parties, who were resident in the Cape Coast Metropolis and in the Kumasi Metropolitan Area. The questionnaire was made up of two main sections. The first section covers the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and includes their age, sex, marital status, religious affiliation and ethnicity. The second section consists of specific issues such definitions of the terms “religion”, “politics” and “peace”, the interrelationship between the three terms, the political atmosphere in Ghana and the role religion plays in politics. Field assistants, who collected the data, were two in number – a Research Assistant and an Assistant Lecturer, both from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Cape Coast. Before the administering of the questionnaire and the conduct of the interviews, the instruments were discussed with the Field Assistants, after which they were pre-tested. The pre-testing was undertaken to remove all possible ambiguities. After that the actual collection of data started. The purposive sampling and snowball techniques were used to select party executives for the study. The snowballing method helped the researcher to have access to students of the University of Cape Coast who were party executives from the various constituencies across the country, while the purposive sampling technique was used because of its convenience in helping reach out to the respondents. In all, 60 questionnaires were administered but only 44 could be used for the study. This is because some of respondents did not complete the questionnaire because they claimed that they did not have time to do so due to the numerous political activities that they had to undertake; others claimed that the questionnaire was too demanding. Data from the field were edited, coded and analysed with the aid of the Statistical Product for Social Services (SPSS).

## Results

### Socio-demographic background of respondents

This section provides information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the functionaries of political parties and covers age, sex, marital status, ethnicity, religious affiliation, level of education and profession (Table 2). The data indicate that the respondents were mostly male political parties' functionaries (77.3 percent). The majority of the respondents were Christians (77.3 percent) and 40.9 percent were Akans. The results of the data regarding the religious affiliation and ethnic background of the respondents support the data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census report of Ghana which indicated that the majority of Ghanaians were Christians (69 percent and belonged to the Akan ethnic group (49 percent) (Ghana Statistical Service 2002). The majority of the respondents were in the teaching profession (50 percent)

**Table 2:** Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	4	9
20-24	5	11.4
25-29	16	36.4
30-34	9	20.5
35-39	4	9
40+	6	13.6
Total	44	100.00
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	10	22.7
Male	34	77.3
Total	44	100.00
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	28	63.6
Married	16	36.4
Total	44	100.00
<b>Religious affiliation</b>		
Christianity	34	77.3
Islam	7	15.9
Traditional African Religion	1	2.3
Other	2	4.5
Total	44	100.00
<b>Level of education</b>		
Middle School	3	6.8
Secondary	9	20.5
University	29	65.9
Others	2	4.5
No education	1	2.3
Total	44	100.00
<b>Ethnic Background</b>		
Ga-Adangbe	1	2.3
Ewe	7	15.9
Mole-Dagbani	3	6.8
Guan	8	18.2
Akan	18	40.9

Others	7	15.9
Total	44	100.00

#### **Profession**

Clergy	2	4.5
Teaching	22	50
Engineering	2	4.5
Other	18	41
Total	44	100.00

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#### **Respondents' understanding of the concepts religion, politics and peace**

Analysis of respondents' explanation of religion revealed two general themes: religion has to do with an individual's identification and relationship with God or a supernatural being; and a belief system that unites people towards the worship of a supernatural being. In the explanations provided by respondents' on politics, two themes emerged, too. First, politics has to do with the expression of divergent views and decisions about the utilisation of resources to the benefit society. Second, politics is about the struggle for power, leadership and governance of a country. Respondents' understanding of peace reflects some of the widely-held views of peace. Their definitions were centered around the following: a state of being secured; living cordially and harmoniously with one another; having equal rights, experiencing justice and being tolerant in the face of divergent opinions; and the absence of conflicts and wars.

#### **Interrelationship between religion and politics**

The views of respondents were sought about the interrelationship between religion and politics. When asked whether there is an interrelationship between religion and politics, 30 respondents representing 68.2 percent responded in the affirmative, while 22.7 percent of them responded in the negative. Another 9.1 per cent could not tell whether there existed any relationship between religion and politics, so they opted for the option: "Don't Know." Some of those who believed that there is an interrelationship between religion and politics offered explanations such as: *religion and politics complement each other to ensure the survival of society; people elect or vote for leaders based on the fact that those individuals belong to their religion, without necessarily considering the capabilities of those personalities; both religion and politics are preconditions for social order, progress and development; and religion teaches about morality and morally upright politicians serve their people very well.*

#### **Religion teaching about politics and peace**

Data on whether religion generally teaches about politics revealed that as many as 61.4 percent of the respondents thought that religion teaches about politics, while 31.8 percent did not think that religion teaches about politics. Three respondents (6.8%) did not know whether religion teaches anything about politics. With regards to respondents' views on whether religion teaches them about peace, the study revealed that an overwhelming majority (97.7%) indicated that religion teaches them about peace, while 2.3 percent could not tell whether or not religion teaches about peace. The views of the majority are captured in the explanation given by a 54 -year old man who was a party chairman for one of the political parties in Cape Coast:

*I belong to Islam and Islam means peace; Islam teaches us to worship God, love our neighbours, to forgive those who offend us so that God can also forgive us when we sin against him.*

### **Knowledge about religious persons deeply involved in politics and their impact**

An investigation into whether respondents knew any religious persons, who were deeply involved in politics, showed that 65.9 percent know about people like that in the country, while 20.5 percent did not know of any such persons. The remaining 13.6 per cent could not give any answer. Those, who stated that they knew such personalities, mentioned the following names: the late President J.E.A. Mills, Rev. S.K. Boafo and Prof. Mike Ocquaye, Mr. Acquah of Cape Coast who was an executive of the Progress Party, Alhaji Karim of Kojokrom in the Western Region of Ghana, who rose to become the National Youth Organiser of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Hon. Samuel Ofori Ampofo.

As regards the impact these politicians have made in politics, twenty-six respondents (89.7%) stated that this category of politicians have made some impact in politics as well as in the enhancement of their religion. Only one respondent (10.3%) believed that they have not made any impact in the political arena. Alhaji Karim and Mr. Acquah were cited as people who helped their people so much, by providing them with a mosque and a church building respectively. This was how one of the respondents described the impact made by the late President Mills:

*He really brought sanity and changed the face of politics in Ghana through incessant preaching of peace, unity, as well as calling for politics devoid of vindictiveness and use of dirty and inflammatory language.*

### **Religious persons and the promotion of peace in politics**

The views of respondents on whether religious persons are likely to promote peace in all their endeavours, including the political arena, revealed that of the 29 respondents who answered this question, 26 (89.7 percent) thought that such persons are likely to promote peace, while exactly 10.3 percent did not think that religious persons are likely to promote peace. Those who believed that religious persons are likely to promote peace in politics explained that because religious people are taught to lead peaceful lives and promote peace always, they are likely to do this when they enter the political arena. Their views could be summed up in what one of them between the 25-29 age bracket said:

*Since most of our religions teach us about peace, I think religious people can help to promote peace knowing well that their beliefs or faith prohibit violence or conflict.*

The only respondent who answered “no” to this question said:

*If religious persons go into politics they cannot promote peace because they will definitely compromise and cannot help but to lie sometimes and steal some moneys that belong to the state.*

An investigation regarding the promotion of peace while practicing politics, revealed that a little over 77.3 percent promoted peace as they practised politics; while 9.1 percent observed that they did not make efforts to promote peace. Only one respondent (13.6%) was not sure as to whether or not he promoted peace. Those who stated that they did not make any efforts to promote peace as they went about their political activities could not provide any reason(s) for their answer. On the other hand, those, who indicated that they promoted peace, said they did that by tolerating dissenting views and advising members of their parties not to view their political opponents as their enemies.

With the overwhelming view that religious persons are likely to promote peace in the political arena, it was therefore, not surprising that 29 of the respondents representing 65 percent felt that it is proper for religious people to get actively involved in politics, while 31.8 percent thought otherwise. The remaining 2.3 percent could not tell whether or not it is proper for religious persons to get actively involved in politics.



### Politics and religious conviction

The respondents' political behaviour and their religious conviction were also investigated. The results showed that 52.3 percent practised politics based on their religious conviction, while 25 percent do not practise politics based on their religious conviction. The remaining 22.7 percent could not tell whether or not they practised politics based on their religious conviction. Those, who said they practise politics based on their religious conviction, explained, among others, that their religion enjoins them to treat people with dignity, so even in politics they tried to abide by that. They did that by treating their political opponents with respect and not hurling insults at them. Others explained that they got involved in politics to better the lots of the less privileged in society. To them helping the less privileged in society is a virtue which all religions teach.

### Conflict in Ghana's political landscape

The study also sought to establish whether the political arena in Ghana is characterised by conflicts. Thirty-six respondents representing 81.8 percent stated that the political arena is characterised by conflicts caused by and large by politicians, foot soldiers of political parties, the youth and the media, while 15.9 percent thought otherwise. 2.3 percent said they did not know whether or not there was political tension. To those, who stated "Don't Know", what seemed to be a conflict(s) were mostly only verbal confrontations, which usually happened during political discussions on radio. They believed that such verbal exchanges would hardly degenerate into violent conflicts. However, some of them noted that there had been a few instances where people had been injured, while others had lost their lives due to political clashes.

### Suggestions to solve the tension in the political arena

The respondents who believed that the political arena is characterised by conflicts made suggestions as to how to solve the problems. The data revealed that 50 percent of them thought that by educating people, particularly politicians, to understand that politics is about the contest of ideas and not insults, the charged political atmosphere would be a thing of the past. 13.9 percent of respondents were of the view that people who do not conduct themselves well during political discussions and campaigning should be sanctioned. Some other suggestions included: the preaching of peace by politicians and religious leaders, tolerance for dissenting views, creating proper avenues for reconciliation, training security officials, particularly the police charged with the responsibility of maintain law and order, to be impartial in the discharge of their duties, etc. Table 3 below presents the suggestions provided by the respondents.

**Table 3:** Suggestions on how to solve the conflicts in the political atmosphere

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education	36	50
Sanctions	5	13.9
Delayed Broadcasting	3	8.3
Politicians/ religious leaders		
Should preach peace	2	5.6
Tolerating diverse views	2	5.6
Proper avenues for reconciliation	2	5.6

Impartial security officials	1	2.7
Voting for genuine/ peace-loving		
Politicians	3	8.3
Total	44	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2012

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study show that respondents had a very good understanding of the concepts of religion, politics and peace. This is because their explanations of the concepts are largely in consonance with what is found in literature. For instance, the explanation of religion with reference to a supernatural entity as the ultimate object of worship or reverence, is in consonance with Zanden's (1990 p.286) definition of religion as "those socially shared ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that have as their focus the realm of the supernatural and beyond." Again, the themes that came out of the explanation of peace reflect the all-embracing African conceptualisation of peace as expressed by the concept "Ubuntu" (Francis, 2006).

The findings also revealed that the majority of the respondents believed that there is an interrelationship between religion and politics. Because of this religion can influence people to become good politicians. Indeed, in the traditional African setting religion did influence the chiefs, who were the political leaders to protect the people and promote peace and harmony. However, in Ghana's current democratic dispensation, religion has not been influencing most politicians to protect the people and promote peace and harmony. The result is that the political temperature is very high in Ghana. Disequilibrium and alienation are on the ascendancy and Ghana has become uprooted. Politicians insult each other and there is a lot of chaos and anarchy because people want to win power at all cost. Ghana's condition cannot but cause disquiet and anxiety. Friction and frustration are undermining the Ghanaian society. If we try to ascertain the reason for this, "and seek an answer exclusively in the political or economic realm (as most scientists have done until now), we will not find the solution to this malaise. This is because the problem is neither purely political nor merely economic, but is an existential one. That is why several scholars have attributed the origins of this contemporary political, economic, and social malaise to secular politics (i.e., where legal and religious activities must be separate and one should not affect the other domain)" (Cristini 2007: 575).

This study seeks to point out that the current political philosophy inherited from Machiavelli, who separates morality and politics, is a perennial source of political problems in Ghana. For many Ghanaian politicians, what they do to gain power does not really matter. What matters is that they gain power through fair or foul means. With them, the end justifies the means. Because of this, hardly can anyone deny the pervasiveness of corruption, nepotism and wickedness in the country. Moral turpitude and vileness have become so insidious in the country that they have become part of the "normal" life among citizens. Kola Owolabi captures the matter when he argues that "moral bankruptcy has pervaded every section of the [Ghanaian] society to the extent that one may be forced to reach the conclusion that immorality is a cultural trait of the people" (Owolabi 1995 cited in Agulanna 2010). According to Chinua Achebe, Africa's problems, and for that matter Ghana's, stems from the fact that the leadership is corrupt. He reasoned that "leaders ought to be a group of educated people moved with great passion. The danger and destruction you see in Africa which has so much human and material resources and spiritual resources, is as a result of misguided leaders. Look at the wealth of our culture; we have taught the world that mankind began there. If you don't have leaders which understand this, you are doomed" (Achunike 2008).

“Seeking solutions to these problems through political means alone will not address the question holistically. In order to do this in a satisfactory manner, one needs to be concerned with the relationship between politics and religion, that is, the spiritual dimension of human life. What needs to be undertaken is the reintegration of religion into politics” (Cristini 2007: 575). It is only through this reintegration that Ghanaians, particularly politicians, will be motivated to be selfless rather than protecting their self-interest and sacrificing the interests of others. They will master their ego and its desire for inordinate power, which has disastrous consequences (Cristini 2007).

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